

\$300,000 awarded to Delaware crop projects

DOVER – Eight educational and research projects supporting Delaware crops will receive more than \$300,000 in federal funding, Delaware Secretary of Agriculture Ed Kee announced today.

“Our partners are performing great work in enhancing and promoting Delaware agriculture,” Kee said in announcing the funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. “These research and educational opportunities will help growers and allied businesses in both the short and long term.”

The projects include:

>> An outreach program to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among children with mental illness and their families, by DDA’s Plant Industries Section and the Planting Hope Urban Farm project (\$27,023).

>> Field research on cultivating edible truffle mushrooms, by Blue Skies Farm near Georgetown (\$34,210).

>> A beginning farmer program by the Delaware Nature Society (\$36,922.75).

>> Three lima bean research projects from the University of Delaware on bean varieties with disease resistance, genome sequencing, and specialty succulent beans (total \$138,910). With more than 12,000 acres of lima beans, Delaware grows more acreage than any other state.

>> Promotional efforts by the Delaware Christmas Tree Growers’ Association on the environmental benefits of real Christmas trees (\$17,041.85).

>> A marketing campaign by the Delaware Farm Bureau on the health benefits of fruits and vegetables (\$48,880).

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is channeled through state departments of agriculture. It covers products known as specialty crops, including fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture. Projects may run for one to three years. Funding cannot be used for field crops, such as corn and soybeans, or animal agriculture.

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